

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY C:WTSHINN

APPROVED BY C:HSNENFELDT

S/S :JPMOFFAT

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 050846

EXDIS, TOSEC 77

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, UR

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL CORN FOR SOVIETS

1. COUNSELOR SONNENFELDT CALLED IN SOVIET CHARGE VORONTSOV MARCH 6 AND INFORMED HIM THAT U.S. PLEASED THAT IMPROVED CROP SITUATION WOULD PERMIT AN INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF U.S. CORN FOR EXPORT UP TO AN ADDITIONAL 500,000 TONS. NOTING SECRETARY SIMON'S TALKS IN MOSCOW LAST OCTOBER AND SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, SONNENFELDT STATED THAT TOTAL AMOUNT OF CORN WE WOULD NOW BE ABLE TO SELL TO THE SOVIETS WOULD BE 1,500,000 TONS. SONNENFELDT SAID HE HOPED THIS STEP WOULD BE VIEWED BY THE SOVIETS IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS INTENDED AS THE DESIRE OF THE USG TO ACCOMMODATE SOVIET INTEREST TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WITHIN OUR ABILITY TO DO SO. NOTING THAT THERE WOULD BE FOLLOW-UP WITH THE EMBASSY BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, SONNENFELDT EXPLAINED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD WANTED THE CHARGE HIMSELF TO KNOW BEFOREHAND OF OUR DECISION.

2. SONNENFELDT SAID THE SECRETARY HAD ASKED HIM TO STATE THAT IF THE SOVIETS DID DECIDE TO BUY ADDITIONAL CORN, THE PURCHASES SHOULD BE MADE IN AN ORDERLY MANNER, SPREAD OUT
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OVER THE PERIOD FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF SEPTEMBER SO

AS TO AVOID ADVERSE MARKET IMPACT.

3. SONNENFELDT SAID THAT WE CONTINUED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEED FOR ADVANCE INFORMATION FROM THE SOVIETS ON INTENDED PURCHASES OF U.S. GRAIN AND SOYBEANS. WE BELIEVED IT TO OUR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE OFFICIALLY TO DISCUSS SUCH PURCHASES BEFOREHAND SO AS TO AVOID REPETITION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY CREATED IN THE PAST.

4. SONNENFELDT CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT WE WOULD GIVE NO VOLUNTARY PUBLICITY TO THIS ACTION. AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY SECRETARY BUTZ LATER IN THE DAY ON REMOVAL OF THE PRIOR APPROVAL SYSTEM ON GRAIN AND SOYBEAN EXPORTS AND ON THE GENERAL SUPPLY SITUATION WOULD NOT SPECIFY THE ADDITIONAL CORN MADE AVAILABLE FOR SOVIET PURCHASE. HOWEVER, IF QUESTIONS WERE RAISED, THE DECISION ON THIS WOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED.

5. VORONTSOV SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER PEOPLE IN MOSCOW WERE INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL CORN BUT HE WOULD INFORM THEM OF ITS AVAILABILITY. HE EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE FOR OUR GESTURE IN TAKING THIS STEP. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY CONCERNING TECHNICAL DETAILS. INGERSOLL

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